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# An Assessment of Citizen Participation in Public Land Mangement

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# An Assessment

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# An Assessment of Citizen Participation In Public Land Management

With the passage of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) of 1969, public land managers were ushered into the era of citizen participation in their administrative decision making. The ensuing thirteen years have been a time of challenge, adjustment, and frustration for the public and the public land management agencies.[1]

The purpose of this paper is to provide an assessment of citizen participation by tracing its development, reviewing its mandate, and by contrasting its strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures. The assessment will draw conclusions from this review to aid in understanding the complexities of this important concept within the public land management agencies.

What is citizen participation?[2] There are numerous definitions for citizen participation, some more comprehensive than others. According to Verba, Sidney, and Norman Nie, "Public participation is an instrumental act by which citizens influence their government."[3] Edward M. Burke states, "Citizen participation is the citizen as the ultimate voice in community decision making."[4] Melvin Mogulof assesses citizen participation as the opportunity "to influence the distribution of benefits or losses which may be visited upon him (or upon those people he represents) as a result of federally supported activity."[5] The definition of citizen participation employed in this assessment belongs to Lloyd Ireland. He said, "Citizen participation is the active involvement of citizen groups in governmental planning and decision making."[6]

## Background

The idea of citizen participation has a deep rooted tradition in this country. To a large degree, the shape of America's democratic tradition, procedures, and federal system has been determined by recurring efforts to answer the question of how much citizen participation is desired in the affairs of government and what form should it take. The necessary procedures and institutions for the practical application of participation was also of much concern.[7]

Thomas Jefferson believed[8] in citizen participation and noted specific devices for achieving it. Some have looked to 18th and[9] 19th century European thinkers for the roots of the current movement. Though we can trace the roots of citizen participation back several centuries, its evolution to present day application has taken many twists and turns. A review of the past four decades will help illustrate how we got to where we are in citizen participation.

Prior to the late 1940's, voting for legislators and administrative leaders had been the public's principal mode for involvement in governmental matters. While some citizen participation opportunities (outside of the election process) existed earlier, until 1946 Federal departments and agencies generally determined their own policies regarding involving citizens in program administration. This was done independent of policies established by Congress or the President.

As one might suspect there was wide variation throughout the government concerning the manner and degree in which citizens were consulted, heard,

and informed on administrative actions. There were at this time no minimum standards of assurance that the public would have a say-so in administrative decision making.[10]

With the passage of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) in 1946, public access to governmental decision making began to develop. The APA required that an agency provide for public comment during rule making, offer opportunities for group representation during trial-type hearings, and when deemed necessary, to hold public meetings on other matters. President Johnson's Great Society Programs brought about additional legislation designed to insure the public's right to participate. The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act required "maximum feasible participation" among the poor in its community action programs. The 1966 "Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act" required wide spread participation among program grant recipients.

Congress amended the APA with the Freedom of Information Act which made available to the public upon request papers, opinions, records, policy statements, and staff manuals. Access to agency decision making opened further.[11] New programs enacted in the late 1960s and early 1970s broadened the right to participate concept from another angle. Previously the citizen participation requirements were directed for the benefit of a specific target population. Now this concept applied to the public in general. This requirement was a result of several decades of dissatisfaction with the way our public lands were being managed. However, this dissatisfaction was rooted in the larger movement of social unrest that swept our country in the 1960s.

Citizen Participation and the Natural Resource Agency

The events of that period forerunning formal citizen participation requirements are, in retrospect, very evident.

Congress had originally told the natural resource agencies to manage their lands in the public interest. The agencies were not sure what in the public interest meant and they didn't have enough dialogue with the public to find out. For many years determining what was in the public interest was left essentially up to the agencies. Neither the public or the agencies were affected enough by natural resource issues to worry about communicating so the paths of communications were not established. This climate began to change after World War II.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, because of a booming economy, the emphasis for public lands was on commodity production. For agencies like the Forest Service this primarily meant increased timber production which was accompanied by an accelerated road construction program. Unfortunately, the public had become accustomed to the pre World War II low level of activity on the National Forests.

The early 1950s brought a recreation boom that caught public agencies and legislators napping. The increased level of timber and road building activity was in conflict with the increased recreation use in the eyes of much of the recreating public.

To balance the consideration given all resources on National Forest lands, the Multiple Use Management Act was passed in 1960. Citizen participation

was not mandated by this legislation, but the need for the legislation was evidence that the seed of distrust had been sown. Were public agencies capable of deciding the public interest on their lands? Four years later, the Wilderness Act of 1964 was enacted out of a lack of faith on the part of many recreationists in multiple use and the Forest Service. The fear was that the accelerated timber activity would lead to the destruction of areas deserving wilderness consideration.[12] The Wilderness Act made mention of public access to wilderness area information.

Ecological balance became another issue on public lands during this period. Books on this subject, such as Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, published in 1962, raised public awareness of ecology. On Earth Day, April 22, 1970, the nation focused its attention on what was happening to its resources of water, land, and air. The public was worried about insecticides, population growth, water pollution, and other technical and complex issues. Because these problems existed on public lands, as well as on private, the citizenry felt that government had betrayed them.

James Fazio and Douglas Gilbert summed up the public's frustration and its reaction in their book entitled Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Agencies.

> In the beginning of this era, resource managers were all but shouldered aside as citizens and legislators moved to assume the leadership in righting the direction of spaceship Earth. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 embodied the buildup of worry in the sixties and the spirit of the new era, one of public awareness and insistence on having a stronger voice in decisions affecting the environment. Later acts, especially the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (1974), National Forest Management Act (1976), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976) added ever-increasing strength to public involvement in resource decisions.[13]

Government could no longer be trusted. The proof in the eyes of many was the Vietnam War and later Watergate. Natural resource agencies could no longer be left alone to decide what was in the public interest. The public demanded access to the governmental decision making process as a result of this distrust and they were successful. Terry L. Cooper summarized the motivating force behind citizen participation as, "the desire of elected officials to satisfy the demands represented by the protests, demonstrations, riots, and general unrest of the 1960s and early 1970s"[14]

## Mandates

The 1969 National Environmental Protection Act was the first piece of major legislation that mandated citizen participation for public land management agencies. The Act required an environmental impact statement for projects significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Perhaps the most far reaching aspect of this act was the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which, when promulgating rules and regulations governing preparation of environmental documents, had much to say about how citizen involvement was to be conducted.

In part, the NEPA public involvement guidelines call for agencies to:

- make diligent efforts to involve the public,
- provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents,
- hold or sponsor public hearings or public meetings whenever appropriate or in accordance with statutory requirements applicable to that agency,
- solicit appropriate information from the public,
- explain in its procedures where interested persons can get information or status reports, Environmental Impact Statements, and other elements of the NEPA process, and
- make Environmental Impact Statements, the comments received, and any underlying documents, available to the public pursuant to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.[15]

Agencies moved with differing speeds to implement the concept of citizen participation. Following the passage of NEPA, the Forest Service immediately began a shift to more open decision making, as did other agencies. Corps of Engineers NEPA guidelines stressed early and continuous liaison with interested segments of the public to raise and resolve potential objections as early as possible. The agency ordered that multiple public meetings and other vehicles for such liaison be utilized during the course of planning. At least one agency, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), treated the public participation provision in NEPA as primarily a one way process to be initiated after tentative agreement had been reached, rather than as an active solicitation of public preferences and objections. Not until issuance of the 1973 and 1974 NEPA guideline revisions did the SCS fall in line.[16]

What NEPA really changed was the point at which the public becomes involved and also the degree of involvement. For years federal agencies held public meetings to announce and explain a decision already made or about to be made. Now the public involvement begins with the inventory and other early processes that lead to the decisions.

While NEPA guidelines apply to all public land management agencies individually, the agencies are directed to involve the public through other legislative acts, Executive Orders, Secretary and Department Memorandums, and agency directives. Here are examples.

National Forest Management Act of 1976, Section 11. This act establishes regulations to give the Federal, State, and local governments and the public adequate notice and opportunity to comment on the formulation of standards, criteria, and guidelines applicable to Forest Service programs of Research, State and Private Forestry, and the National Forest System.

National Forest Management Act of 1976, Section 6. This section of the act requires public participation in the development, review, and revision of land and resource management plans, and the coordination of such plans with State and local units of government and other Federal agencies. This section also requires the development of the plans by October 1985 for all National Forest System lands.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. This act pertains primarily to BLM and directs public involvement in revising land use plans. Also, requires coordinating by the Forest Service with the Secretary of the Interior for land use planning, acquisitions, and dispositions and requires coordination with land use planning and management programs.

Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These regulations direct agencies to make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing the NEPA process and to provide public notice of related public participation activities and the availability of documents to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected.

Presidential Executive Order 12044, Improving Government Regulations (March 24, 1978.) This order seeks to improve existing and future regulations to achieve effectiveness and efficiency without imposing any unnecessary burdens on the public in a manner that minimizes paperwork, with opportunities for early participation and comment by other Federal agencies, State and local governments, businesses, organizations, and individual members of the public.

Presidential Executive Order 11514, March 5, 1970. This Executive order directs the heads of Federal agencies to develop procedures to ensure the fullest practicable provisions of timely information and understanding of Federal plans and programs with environmental impact in order to obtain the views of interested parties.

Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974. This act requires public participation in the development, review, and revision of land management plans; and requires procedures to give Federal, State, and local governments and the public adequate notice and an opportunity to comment upon the formulation of standards, criteria, and guidelines applicable to Forest Service programs.

Endangered Species Act of 1973. This act requires public participation in the identification of endangered species and in the preparation of management plans for the protection of plants and animals.

## Techniques and Uses

There are numerous methods and techniques used by the various agencies to involve the public. The Institute on Citizen Participation lists 33 participatory techniques.[17] The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations names 31 techniques.[18] The U.S. Forest Service's "Inform and Involve Handbook" lists 57 techniques.[19]

Out of this vast array of possibilities, natural resource agencies usually rely upon only a handful of techniques that appear to work the best. They include public meetings, workshops, presentations to groups, advisory groups, ad hoc committees, key contacts, questionnaires and surveys, and day to day key contacts.
The selection of the participatory techniques to employ is left to the

discretion of the administrator, as is the amount of participation to use. This is because no two situations will necessarily require the same procedures. A conscientious manager will normally consider the ways public participation can be beneficial in keeping with the objectives of a given project and select the participatory techniques that should yield the best results. For any given situation, it is doubtful that any two managers will select the same techniques.

The legislation and other mandates for citizen participation have, for the most part, left to the discretion of the individual agencies the specific use to make of citizen input. Generally citizen input is used by agencies to identify issues, to suggest solutions or alternative ways of mitigating the issues, and to obtain public preference for a course of action.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals of citizen participation vary by source, but generally carry similar themes. According to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations the objectives of citizen participation are:

1. to give information to citizens,
2. get information from and about citizens,
3. improve public decisions, programs, projects, and services,
4. enhance acceptance of public decisions, programs, projects, and services, and
5. supplement public agency work.[20]

The Forest Service Manual lists these objectives:

1. To help the Forest Service make better decisions by creating informational exchanges with interested and affected publics and to accommodate public desires to know and to be heard.
2. To encourage public participation in the planning and decision process by providing data and other inputs.
3. To be aware of and respond to the values of the public and to evaluate how they will be affected by the Forest Service.[21]

Other public land management agency citizen participation objectives are similar since NEPA guidelines apply to each.

## Problem Areas

Despite its lofty goals and objectives, the prevailing thought by the participating public is one of disappointment with the citizen participation process. Thomas Darbert called the Forest Service's public involvement process a failure.[22] Robert and Mary Kweit said that citizen participation is a flawed device.[23] Judy Rosener pictures administrators as being confused about what is expected of them and that citizens distrust the public participation programs and view such efforts as a charade.[24] Administrators hoping for smoother sailing during a period of controversy over public land management have found instead that their jobs are more complex and demanding because of citizen participation.

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations broadly summarizes the problems with citizen participation.

1. Citizen participation programs are often time consuming and costly and sometimes they yield little in the way of tangible results.

2. Citizens who are drawn to the citizen participation processes are not truly representative of the general citizenry. They tend to represent merely special interests or concerns.

3. By instituting citizen participation procedures, the government "fulfills" a desire for more citizen involvement; yet in many cases, procedures are implemented in such a manner that real participation is not encouraged.

4. Citizen participation procedures may undermine the representative system already in place where people elect officials who presumably speak and act for them.

5. The effects of various types of citizen participation are not always the same.[25]

Ground level experience with the process tends to validate the Commission's findings. The problems with citizen participation can best be understood if they are redefined and amplified. This assessment will examine five problem areas.

Not a Panacea

The overriding difficulty with citizen participation is that it is not the panacea that everyone had hoped for. Instead of promoting harmony it promoted, if anything, conflict. In fact, Lloyd Ireland in a 1975 article in Public Administration Review viewed citizen participation as a tool for conflict management. Ireland said, "Conflict over planning and management on the public lands is inherent in the very nature of the process. Harmony as a goal of planning is an illusion. Veto powers in the hands of affected groups make conflict management a necessity. The goal of conflict management is to create a process for decision making that the interested public will accept as legitimate, even when their demands may not be fully satisfied."[26] According to Ireland, the concept of conflict management has three significant parts.

1. It recognizes that planning is an open, ongoing, activity.

2. It emphasizes the process of demand assessment and plan formulation, and the process of weighing alternatives and setting trade-offs. We may not be able to create a plan that delights everyone, but we can hope to construct a process of planning that leaves participants feeling that their needs have been fairly considered.

3. It stresses that perceptions held by interest groups are the true source of consent to agency decisions.[27]

This same theme of conflict management is echoed in the Institute for Participatory Planning Handbook. According to the Institute, the goal of

citizen participation should be Substantive Effective Agreement for a Course of Action or SEACA.[28] This concept maintains that complete agreement by participants regarding an agency decision is virtually impossible. The agency goal should be to foster enough agreement between the parties that the decision can be implemented.

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernment Relations shares the idea that citizen participation will not produce success from the viewpoint of any given participant in any given situation. "There is no perfect citizen participation mechanism", concludes the Commission.[29]

Thomas Daubert, in reviewing how the U.S Forest Service will fulfill its role as a decision maker when dealing with conflicts, states that the Forest Service's public involvement process has failed because it attempts to avoid inevitable conflicts. Daubert implores the Forest Service to be more than simply a mediator to conflicts, but to recognize conflict as a dynamic, continuous process which is unavoidable and with constructive functions. He feels that conflict management should be a formal goal of public involvement.[30]

If citizen participation is a tool for conflict management, as has been suggested, what is the role of the public agency in such matters? At times the real conflict may be between competing interest groups rather than between the public agency and the interest groups. In these instances the agency is pushed into a role of a mediator as Daubert has suggested. The concept of the public agency as being a mediator is interesting but to be successful, the public involvement effort must be directed toward the creation of a setting in which the interest groups identify each other rather than the public agency as the problem. That can be a tall order. To successfully manage conflict, the agency role must be identified as that of mediator, decision maker, or a combination of the two. The latter role will probably yield the best results.

It is Political

The second problem is that the citizen participation is more political than the agencies realize. The special interest groups are well aware of the political nature of this process, but the public land management agencies have been slow to grasp this fact.

A university Dean and former Forest Service employee, R.W. Behan, warned over a decade ago that administrators should learn to function in a para-political environment.[31] He believes that the job of the administrator is similar to that of the politician in that both must try to determine where the public interest lies in a given situation. In a speech to the Forest Service in 1970, Behan said, "I need not ask you to become para-politicians, because you can't escape it; I must ask you to be good ones."[32]

To state that administrators must be para-politicians one would have to believe in the demise of the separation of powers, or the so called policy-administration dichotomy. Behan reasons that administrators make policy even in routine decision matters in that distribution is made of values and costs are imposed at the local level. Behan believes that policy decisions are political decisions.
It is true that the citizen involvement programs bear a striking

resemblance to legislative hearings and that public preference for a given program alternative is carefully considered. What is not clear is the administrator's responsibility to the agency's constituency. Certainly this relationship does not parallel that of the politician and his constituency.

The Silent Majority

Even as para-politicians, public land decision makers must still abide by their charge to manage in the public interest. This leads to the third problem area with citizen participation. The difficulty the administrator encounters with this mandate is that the vast majority of the public he serves is silent. How do you manage in the public interest when most of your constituency is uncommunicative?

There are several schools of thought as to why the majority is silent. Robert and Mary Kweit believe it is because citizen participation is viewed by those who would participate as too costly in terms of money and time. The silent majority lack the resources that would induce the bureaucracy to clear the road to their participation. The Kweit's conclude that the impact of citizen participation is to create a bureaucracy responsible to specialized segments of society rather than to more generalized interests.[33] In other words, the bureaucracies have become too specialized and too complex for the average citizen to influence. The silent segment of the public may not have, or may not take, the time to acquire the skills needed to understand the problems facing the bureaucracy or to formulate alternative solutions.

R.W. Behan believes the silent majority falls into three categories.

1. Those that are apathetic. They don't care what the active minority does.

2. Those that are acquiescent. They will abide by any decision reached by the active minority.

3. The few that will not have any idea of what's going on or the ignorant.

Through the medium of acquiescence, apathy, or ignorance, the silent majority consents to the choices of the active minority.[34]

Does this mean then that the administrator should not be concerned over the wishes of the silent majority? Behan believes that it does. His advice is if the public does not express an interest in a given activity, don't force it. Behan believes that by ignoring the silent majority, the administrator concentrates on people who do care. He further states, "By virtue of our constitutionally designed and imprinted political system, the knowledgeable, concerned, and affected people in a given issue will appear as conflicting minorities, as organized political interest groups. The task of public involvement activities, once again, is not to seek and attempt to satisfy a majority that has to be silent, but to reconcile those conflicting minorities who are not."[35] Sounds like sage advice for administrators.

How to Measure Success

The fourth problem with citizen participation is that there is no way to

measure the success of a program as Rosener points out.[36] A thorough, well thought out, professionally handled citizen participation program is no guarantee that the decision will not end up in Court. Conversely, at times, a very minimal program will suffice.

The Forest Service's second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) undertaken to inventory and recommend areas for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System was conducted with the largest public participation program in the agency's history. If quantity of participation equated success, RARE II would have been successful. Instead many areas recommended for wilderness appear hopelessly bogged down by Congressional disinterest, agency appeals, and at least one major lawsuit. Because of this it would be easy to conclude that the citizen participation program for RARE II was a failure.

There appears to be little help on the horizon in an evaluation method or model. Administrators must continue to use their best judgement in determining what will work and what will not.

A 1977 study by Graves and La Page found that neither the amount of public involvement done or the techniques used spelled success or failure. What really mattered was the agency's openness and its employee's competence. These two qualities produced increased public confidence in the agency. This in turn led to better acceptance by the public of decisions rendered.[37] This study should be of some consolation to administrators in that while the success of individual public participation programs may be difficult to ascertain, the public's faith in the agency may be the deciding factor in the long run.

Distrust

The final problem with citizen participation to be reviewed is that both the participating public and the agencies are distrustful of each other. The public criticizes the agencies for making citizen participation too time consuming, costly, and complex for meaningful participation. The agencies question the tactics used by special interest groups to influence decision making.

Stephen Cupps, in a 1977 article in Public Administration Review, discusses the question of tactics by citizen groups by asking, "Precisely whom do the public interest groups speak for and how accurately do they reflect the viewpoints of their constituency?"[38] Citizen groups often imply that their interest ought to be given special consideration or accorded higher priority than other group demands because they speak for the public and therefore do not have "ordinary" special interest attachments or constituencies to represent. Cupps said, "These groups have a tendency to use words like 'public interest', 'environmental', and 'consumer' to cloak their own personal opinions and proposals with a degree of broader legitimacy."[39] The problem of tactics and style used by special interest groups has antagonized public agency administrators, Cupps feels.[40] Complaints are voiced by administrators of over-dramatization, hyperbole, and shrillness with which citizen groups sometimes present their case. Another contention by Cupps is that citizen groups are using their growing political influence and administrative and legal leverage to create excessive delays.[41] Cupps concludes that "Ultimately no one wins, least of all the public, when political and administrative structures are prevented from processing important decisions, whatever the nature of these decisions might be."[42]

Robert and Mary Kweit find the largest impediment to effective citizen participation is that decision making in the bureaucracy has become too complex and costly for most citizens. "Citizens may not have, or may not take the time to acquire, the skills needed to understand the problems facing the bureaucracy or to formulate solutions offering alternatives to bureaucratic action."[43] The organized special interest groups can impact bureaucratic decision making but the general public remains outside the process not by choice but out of a lack of resources.

Terry L. Cooper, in The Bureaucrat, reports from a 1976 study conducted by HEW's Citizen Task Force contrasting views of how well citizen participation programs work.

Administrator's View of Citizen Participation Programs

| Positive | Negative |
|---|---|
| 1. Compliance with legal requirements. | 1. Staff time diverted from primary mission. |
| 2. Support from some elected officials for program maintenance. | 2. Budgetary resources diverted from primary mission. |
| 3. Support from some citizens for program legitimacy. | 3. Delays in program planning and implementation. |
| | 4. Open conflict between organization and some citizens. |
| | 5. Ambiguity of public preferences. |
| | 6. Lack of knowledge on part of citizen. |

Citizen's View of Citizen Participation Programs

| Positive | Negative |
|---|---|
| 1. Feeling of "responsible citizenship". | 1. Experience of being ineffectual. |
| 2. Possibility of gaining new knowledge. | 2. Anger from being manipulated. |
| 3. Hope of impacting public policy to a limited degree. | 3. Expenditure of time, money, and effort. |
| | 4. Limited opportunity for expression. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 5. Conflict with other citizens.<br>6. Resistance from the organization.<br>7. Boredom with meeting format.<br>8. Confusion over conflicting facts. |

The study also contrasted the citizen's views of administrators with the administrator's view of citizen groups.

| Citizen's View of Administrators | Administrator's View of Citizens |
|---|---|
| 1. Manipulative. | 1. Apathetic. |
| 2. Not really interested in views of citizens. | 2. Lack adequate knowledge of the problem. |
| 3. Responds to political pressure, more than rational argument. | 3. Act on basis of emotion. |
| 4. Protective of the organization. | 4. Irregular in participation. |
| 5. Cautiously complies with the letter of the law. | 5. View problem from limited perspective. |
| 6. Inflexible when confronted with alternatives. | 6. Do not understand agency's responsibility and constraints. |
| 7. Self-interested. | 7. Self-interested. |
| 8. Preoccupied with procedure. | 8. Competing and conflicting views. |
| | 9. Unrealistic demands.[44] |

This study illustrates the work that is needed in building confidence for the citizen participation process and in improving the element of trust between agencies and the citizenry.

Positive Side

With all its short comings and problems, there is a positive side to citizen participation.

Stephen Cupps lists four affirmative impacts of citizen participation.

1. The creation of public issues out of problems which otherwise

might never have reached a level of serious debate or controversy. Matters once considered private are now seen as properly the subject of public discussion and debate.

2. Citizen groups have insisted that society's failure to recognize and address these issues is not simply private misfortune, but public injustice calling for the direct intervention of governmental authority.

3. A premium on openness has been placed on political and administrative proceedings and the free flow of public information.

4. The process constitutes an effective check on the exercise of administrative discretion.[45]

A review of public land management agency planning and decision documents reveals the positive impact of citizen input. Recently American Forest magazine, in a series of articles designed to promote citizen participation, cited several examples of citizen participation raising an issue and then having that issue resolved to the satisfaction of all involved. On the Mt. Baker - Snoqualomie National Forest in Washington, an issue arose around the need for an Off Road Vehicle (ORV) area. Through citizen participation an ORV area was developed and agreed upon by environmentalists and ORV users. The resulting plan accommodated this controversial use in an environmentally sound way.[46]

In Minnesota the need for recovery plans for the red fox surfaced as an issue from citizen participation undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service. As a result of citizen interest and cooperation, the red fox is on the way to recovery in that state.[47]

Conclusions

What conclusions about citizen participation may be drawn from this assessment?

1. Citizen participation, public participation, public involvement, or whatever the phrase affixed to the concept of citizen involvement in governmental planning and decision making, is here to stay. The concept has a deep rooted history in this republic. Its mandate to public land management agencies is woven throughout recent legislation, Executive Orders, Departmental and Agency directives.

2. Citizen participation should not be viewed as a panacea to cure all ills but as a tool for conflict management. The goal should not be harmony but an implementable decision. A solid grasp of this concept is necessary for improving citizen participation.

3. Decision makers should not become preoccupied with locating and involving the "silent majority" but should concentrate on the "active minority." While this idea may conflict in the minds of administrators with the mandate to manage in the public interest, the active minority in a democracy usually shape the nation's priorities.

4. Public administrators should realize that they are operating in a "para political" environment and should be guided accordingly.

The separation of policy and administration is shaky at best. A political type assessment of what will fly and what will not can be most beneficial in this age. Citizen participation is an excellent tool for assisting in such an assessment.

5. Both the public and public land managers should view citizen participation as a cooperative venture that can work best when preconceived ideas about each other are discarded. We must remember that direct public participation in agency decision making is a recent development. Distrust and resentment are only natural for a period of time. Perhaps the "mating dance" is over and meaningful involvement and participation loom on the horizon.

6. In gaining public acceptance of agency decisions, the agency's openness and fairness with the public and agency professionalism may be of more value than the citizen participation program. Conversely, the citizen participation program may be the needed vehicle to demonstrate to the public agency openness, fairness, and professionalism.

Regardless of the complexities and frustrations of conducting or participating in a citizen participation program, it is a healthy and necessary exercise in a democratic society.

## Footnotes

[1] The term public land agencies refers to the national agencies charged with public land management. In this paper the term refers to the Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Corps of Engineers. The Forest Service appears as the focal agency because of access to information and the writer's familiarity with it.

[2] The terms citizen participation, public participation, and public involvement are used interchangeably but they have essentially the same meaning. The materials reviewed in preparing this paper used these three terms and to substitute one common term would detract from the writings.

[3] Verba Nie, Sidney Nie, and Norman H. Nie, Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

[4] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Citizens Participation in the American Federal System, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980). Quoting Edmund M. Burke, "Citizen Participation Strategies, "Journal of American Institute of Planners", (Washington D.C.: American Institute of Planners, Sept. 1978), p. 287.

[5] Ibid., quoting Melvin B. Mogulof, "Citizen Participation," A Review and Commentary on Federal Policies and Practices, (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1970), pp. 2-3.

[6] Lloyd C. Ireland, "Citizen Participation - A Tool for Conflict Management on the Public Lands," Public Administration Review, (1975), Vol. 35 (3), p. 268.

[7] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Citizens Participation in The American Federal System, p. 25.

[8] Ibid., p. 25.

[9] Ibid., p. 27.

[10] Ibid., p. 99.

[11] Ibid., p. 100.

[12] Harold K. Steen, The U.S. Forest Service, A History, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 308-322.

[13] James R. Fazio and Douglas L. Gilbert, Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Agencies, (Dubuque, Iowa and Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1981).

[14] Terry L. Cooper, "Citizen Participation: From Political Response to Administrative Initiative," The Bureaucrat, (1979), Vol. 8 (4), pp. 40-49.

[15] U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Protection of the Environment, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).

[16] R.N.L. Andrews, "Agency Response to NEPA: A Comparison and Implications," Natural Resources Journal, Vol. 16, pp. 301-322.

[17] Institute for Participatory Planning, Citizen Participation Handbook, (3rd edition: 1978).

[18] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Citizens Participation in the American Federal System, p. 2.

[19] U.S. Forest Service, Inform and Involve Handbook, (Washington, D.C.: 1977), pp. 113-114.

[20] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Citizens Participation in the American Federal System, p. 63.

[21] U.S. Forest Service Manual, 1601.10.

[22] Thomas F. Carbert, "Public Involvement From a Conflict Management Perspective," Western Wildlands, 4 (4), pp. 27-33.

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[24] Judy B. Rosener, "Citizen Participation: Can We Measure Its Effectiveness?", Public Administration Review, Vol. 38 (5), p. 462.

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